

So you are moving? What to consider when relocating offices

By Jackie Furey

Are you a Facilities Manager, an Office Manager, or the PA to the Managing Director? Have you



just had the meeting with your MD who tells you that “we are moving offices and guess what - you’re running the project!”? Then this article is for you...

The Golden Rule

Firstly and most importantly, the best piece of advice I can give you is

Never under estimate how emotive the subject of moving office can be for all of the staff involved.

Communicate, Communicate, and Communicate some more

When all that seems important and absorbs your time is the physical build or refurbishment of your new office space, you must engage with the staff as much as possible. Include them in your planning, ask them how they feel about the current office space, how it works and what it does and doesn’t do well. Staff workshops or online perception questionnaires are good for this. Where possible and where time allows include them in some of the decision making for your new office, i.e. the choice of furniture, new meeting room names, or the brand of coffee they prefer – just be careful you do this in a structured way as it can become a free for all! It is also very useful to set up a pilot office layout for them to familiarise themselves with, to try, test and “kick the tyres”. Ask for their feedback, but above all please talk to them about what is needed to create a functional office

environment and how it can support them better in their jobs - you'll be surprised at what matters most to your colleagues.

What do I know...

Over the past 18 years I have managed some of the most prestigious relocation projects in the UK. I have seen the most magnificent of buildings be built and a bank balance spent to kit them out with state of the art technology, top of the range furnishings and furniture, and the best caterers and coffee suppliers in town. But if the process of moving from A to B is poorly communicated and badly managed, the project, however much you spend on it, will be deemed a failure by all of those who work within it. A seasoned Move Manager once told me when I was first starting out, that you never hear about a successful relocation project, and there are no truer words than those; it's only the bad ones, the staff recall and talk about: "Do you remember when we moved into these offices, what a disaster that was!". Everyone still remembers the debacle of Terminal 5 opening even though the end result is fantastic.

Don't forget the day job

Whether you're a busy Facilities Manager, Office Manager or the PA to the MD, you all have a day job to do. You have been asked to deliver the relocation project as you know how the company functions, you know the key people that work within the company, and you understand how your building operates, so obviously you would seem the natural choice. Nevertheless, obvious choice or not you had a busy day job to do before it was asked of you to take on these extra responsibilities so who is going to do your work? It might seem interesting and exciting, but it is the attention to detail that counts in delivering a successful relocation and this can be very time consuming.

Talk to the professionals

My advice would be to engage with the professionals, speak to an established and experienced Move Management organisation. They can tailor their solutions to fit with your budget and project requirements. Perhaps all you need is a mentor once a week to give you advice; to check where you are, look at what you need to achieve and equip you, with the know how to get the job done. Alternatively you may need someone experienced who can be your arms and legs to get around to all of the departments discuss their individual requirements and record and assess their physical needs, then feed that back into a master plan you are overseeing. Where your time is limited you could consider employing a full time Move Manager who will take responsibility for all things relocation related, staff, fixtures and fittings, contractors, landlords etc. they will report back to you flagging any areas of concern whilst allowing you to get on with your day job.

Take a position of overview, not one that's hands on

As the project stakeholder my advice would be take an overview, try not to get caught up in the minutiae of the project. Leave that to the experienced team you have employed to deliver the project for you. Insist upon regular project meetings, progress reports highlighted key issues and risks needing your attention, and project plans that highlight exactly where you are at any one time.

Taking this stance in the project early on leaves you to manage the critical business issues for your organisation and be proactive in problem solving.

First Steps

If you want to know more about the first steps to planning a corporate relocation, Baker Stuart are happy to share with you a quick guide of things to consider for corporate relocation projects. Please contact us at office@bakerstuart.com and we will send it to you. Alternatively if you'd like to meet we would be happy to meet with you for a no obligation discussion to review your plans and to

provide with some guidance for the future. If you'd like us to arrange a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you are interested in finding out more we will continue our series of blogs on relation and workplace matters on our website. Please visit our website at www.bakerstuart.com/ and subscribe to receive future articles or follow us on twitter [@bakerstuartltd](https://twitter.com/bakerstuartltd) or LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/company/bakerstuart>

About Baker Stuart	<p>Baker Stuart are a specialist consultancy provide a personal, bespoke and comprehensive service to occupiers. Being focused solely on the workplace this has allowed us to develop expertise in depth in the analysis of our Clients' businesses, the creation and delivery of effective real estate strategies and corresponding office environments.</p> <p>We provide a range of consultancy services including workplace analysis, workplace consultancy, real estate strategies, project & programme management, project procurement, furniture consultancy, contract administration, design management, change management, facilities management, CAD/CFM and relocation consultancy.</p> <p>We have an award winning track record and have helped businesses both public and private sector, from SMEs to multinationals to use the working environment as a catalyst to drive positive behavioural change.</p>		
About the author	<table border="1"><tr><td data-bbox="459 667 638 896"></td><td data-bbox="638 667 1487 896"><p>Jackie Furey</p><p>Jackie is a highly respected workplace consultant responsible for delivering some of the UK's most notable public and private sector projects over 17 years. She managed major relocations, CAFM implementation contracts, Space Planning & Design teams and Space utilisation projects.</p></td></tr></table>		<p>Jackie Furey</p> <p>Jackie is a highly respected workplace consultant responsible for delivering some of the UK's most notable public and private sector projects over 17 years. She managed major relocations, CAFM implementation contracts, Space Planning & Design teams and Space utilisation projects.</p>
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